The decision to use graphics over text is one writers consider when communicating, but which one is best for ethically illustrating technical data? “Graphics can mislead as easily as words can”(Anderson 353). The writer is most responsible for using ethics when conveying textual data in the form of graphs, as unethical delivery “lead(s) your readers to wrong conclusions” (Anderson 353).

“To design bar graphs and line graphs that convey an accurate visual impression” (Anderson 353) you have to provide a consistent point of reference for all empirical data, commonly known as a zero point. This provides a consistent scale for comparison and prevents representing “the difference between (pictorial data) larger than it actually is” (Anderson 354). Ethics in textual data is a lot different because the reader already has a reference point and can create their own sense of scale when analyzing your data. Bolding creates the same illusion of salience that choosing colors do and can be used to “distract the reader’s focus from the most important point” (Anderson 354). Bright colors used incorrectly “deemphasize the crucial bad news” (Anderson 354), thus misleading readers. Textual data can be easier for communicating ethically but is less clear and is longer to uptake, making graphs overall more reader-centered.